

An ongoing search for discomfort

Brittany Roberts wants to make sure others don't feel as she used to: an outsider

NATHAN ENGLISH
Reporter I @nathan_3nglish

Brittany Roberts was comfortable in a city. Showing her self-described loud and colorful personality while walking around St. Louis was second nature to her. But she gave up the comfort of a packed metropolitan area to move somewhere that made her uncomfortable — Maryville.

Roberts went from a place where diversity was so normal it wasn't even noticed to a place where children will sometimes look upon her in awe because she is one of few Black people they have ever seen. She doesn't mind though; she enjoys being uncomfortable. It forces growth.

Her willingness to step outside of the familiar and experience new things led her to Northwest as a student. Now, as a coordinator in Northwest's Office of Diversity and Inclusion, she hopes that same willingness will lead to healing and progress in the community in a community that once made her feel like an outsider.

The always energetic Roberts is on a mission. The mission, she says, is not one that will occur overnight but is one that will take time and work from everyone.

Roberts is now what many in the area would consider a town-

ie. Initially never quite intending to stay after her undergraduate degree, the newest diversity coordinator lives in Maryville with her fiancee Courtney Morgan and their three children.

Roberts first set foot in Maryville as an undergraduate student in 2011. She was a resident of seventh floor Millikan, or as she jokingly referred to it, "the projects." Roberts became a Bearcat with the intention of becoming a doctor. Unbothered by blood or gore and with "Grey's Anatomy" at what many consider the height of its popularity, Roberts was ready to embrace the world of medicine, until she saw her transcript.

"Wait, math?" Roberts said. "No one said anything about math."

Staring back at her was a long list of chemistry and calculus classes, so Roberts decided to change to political science, partially because of her love of history and current events and partially because of the influence of another student, who would become her closest friend.

Marlon Oliver first met Roberts on the seventh floor of the high rise while studying with a mutual friend for a test in their Introduction to American Government class. Roberts seemed to be under the impression that Oliver had shady motives for being on a girls floor late at night. Oliver and their mutual friend plead their case saying that the purpose of the hangout was a simple study session.

"Mmm, that's all y'all better be in there doin'," Roberts said to Oliver in their first meeting.

SEE ROBERTS | A4



ANDREW WEGLEY | NW MISSOURIAN

Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator Brittany Roberts introduces herself to Northwest's Board of Regents at the Board's Jan. 28 meeting. Roberts, a Northwest alumna, began working at the University in December.

Campus adapts to new risk category



ADDALYNN BRADBURY | NW MISSOURIAN

Teri Harr receives her second dose of the Pfizer vaccine in the Hughes Fieldhouse Feb. 17. As of Feb. 17, 571 second doses have been administered in Nodaway County.

SIDNEY LOWRY
News Reporter I @sidney_lowry

Nodaway County was moved to a Category 3: Serious Risk ranking Feb. 8, a COVID-19-related designation that removed occupancy limits and other restrictions. With this change, student organizations on Northwest's campus wondered what was to come for events for the rest of the semester.

Kori Hoffmann, assistant vice president of student engagement and development, sent a letter in an email to student leaders and advisers on campus outlining the Northwest mitigation for events on campus now that the county has moved categories.

Events are still allowed to be held virtually on or off campus but are expected to follow previous Northwest measures of social distancing at 6 feet and wearing face coverings.

Though occupancy limits are off in spaces within Nodaway County, Northwest is still limiting their capacity in rooms to accommodate social distancing.

Vice President of Student Affairs Matt Baker said Northwest is sticking to the limits that were set on individual rooms around campus. The Ballroom in the J.W. Jones Student Union had a capacity of 400 but was lowered to follow the guidelines set by the county and the University.

"In the summer we came up with our COVID occupancy limits which set that room to 50," Baker said. "Hopefully in the fall we could go back to 400, but for now we want our students to stay here, so we are committed to social distancing and other guidelines."

Philanthropy Chair for Sigma Kappa Avery Biga said that although there was a change in the categories, she didn't know if she should change her events.

SEE VACCINE | A4

Data shows lowest active case count since mid-July

ANDREW WEGLEY
Managing Editor I @andrewwegley

After dozens of grim milestones, a score of deaths and more than 10 months of volatile fluctuation, there are fewer active coronavirus cases in Nodaway County now than at any other point since July, bringing a note of good news to a county and city that has been upended and divided by COVID-19.

The county's active case count dropped to 18 Feb. 15 — the latest available data at the time of publication — after only two residents tested positive in the four preceding days. The figure marks the lowest total since at least mid-July, when Nodaway County first started tracking active cases. The previous low was 24, recorded Aug. 11 and three times from Feb. 5-7.

Additionally, Nodaway County's rolling seven-day average — which tracks the average number of residents who test positive per day over the previous week — dropped to 1.43 Feb. 15, the lowest mark since July 15, nearly two weeks before Maryville first issued its mask ordinance July 27.

More than half of the active cases — a total of 10 — involve Northwest staff or students, according to the school's COVID-19 dashboard. But even at the University, where numbers soared in late August as returning students brought an intense spike of COVID-19 cases with them to Nodaway County, the active caseload has remained remarkably low. There haven't been more than 20 active cases among University staff and students since mid-December.

University scrambles during power outages

KENDRICK CALFEE
News Editor I @calfee_kc

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Northwest canceled all class Tuesday after rolling power outages were initiated by Evergy, a regional electric company with Maryville in its power grid. While the outages were put in place to avoid uncontrolled, extended loss of power to the area, the University was left to make quick decisions on how to operate while they occurred.

The University Police Department took to Twitter to keep students up to date on campus operations amid the uncertainty. After the University canceled in-person classes Feb. 15 and 16, classes were intended to be held online instead.

Only after the rolling power outages throughout Maryville began affecting wireless internet connections did the University cancel all classes Feb. 16.

But campus reopened the following day, and in an email from the University Feb. 17, students were notified that power outages may continue.

"If the Northwest campus loses power, remain calm," the email read. "Faculty will instruct students of actions to take, and individuals should remain in buildings, to the extent possible, to preserve heat."

The Feb. 17 email also said in the event campus were to lose power, Residential Life and Campus Dining staff would provide instructions to people in their facilities.

The latest update Evergy gave for

the Maryville area at the time of publication was that the Southwest Power Pool still advises Evergy to operate under an energy emergency alert level 2. This means enough stress is still on the power grid that further outages could occur where necessary.

The goal of outages regulated by the Southwest Power Pool, which oversees electrical operations in 17 states including Missouri, is to avoid large, uncontrolled, extended power outages throughout the region. Due to extreme temperatures that are affecting regional power supply — and even greater energy demand — implementing controlled, temporary emergency electricity reductions lessen that risk.

"Thankfully, Evergy wasn't required to implement temporary

power outages overnight," Evergy wrote on Twitter Feb. 17. "Evergy remains on standby in the event that the SPP calls for additional emergency power outages."

Andrew Baker, Evergy's senior communications manager, said Tuesday that intermittent outages, or rolling outages, are a measure taken by electric companies to prevent situations where power is out for long periods of time, like in Texas where at least 12 people have died.

"That's one reason we are doing these short energy reductions, to put us in a position where we are not facing that same situation," Baker said.

SEE POWER | A4

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Roughly 700 receive second vaccine dose

MADELINE MAPES
News Editor | @MadelineDMapes

At the first COVID-19 mass vaccination clinic three weeks ago, roughly 700 residents received their first dose of the vaccine. This week, they were scheduled to receive their second dose at the Feb. 17 mass clinic.

President of Mosaic Medical Center - Maryville Nate Blackford said the hospital has received enough second doses to vaccinate everyone who is scheduled to receive a second dose.

Blackford explained that when any vaccination administrator orders a shipment of first dose vaccines from Pfizer or Moderna, the same amount of second dose vaccines is guaranteed once they have received the first shipment of doses.

"I believe we have 726 that got doses three weeks ago ... we will be administering those individuals their second doses," Blackford said.

He also noted that as of Feb. 15 Mosaic - Maryville has that supply in house and ready for the upcoming mass vaccination event.

Blackford said the shipment of second doses comes separate from the shipment of first doses for both Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. He also said that both companies guarantee the same amount of second doses per shipment according to how many were received of first doses.

The Missouri COVID-19 Dashboard urges people to get their sec-



ADDALYNN BRADBURY | NW MISSOURIAN
A student volunteer scans temperatures before community members can check in at the mass vaccination clinic in the Hughes Fieldhouse. The vaccine clinic has consistently hosted weekly vaccination events since Jan. 26.

ond dose as soon as they can after either the 21-day or 28-day waiting period, depending on if Pfizer or Moderna was administered.

Blackford said it is important that people receive their second doses through the same vaccine administrator who gave their first doses to help ensure an adequate supply of second doses at all vaccine administrator locations.

The Missouri COVID-19 Dash-

board also states that people who miss their scheduled time should still get their second dose as soon as possible.

Many have questioned what would happen if people miss doses of the COVID-19 vaccines. Blackford said there is not enough testing to know what would really happen.

"Best practice is that you receive your second dose within seven days after its due date," Blackford said.

The leniency provided by the seven extra days helps with scheduling the mass clinics in that it doesn't have to be held on the exact day that the vaccine is due in case of complications with weather or vaccine availability.

"There's some new literature coming out ... about what the manufacturers are saying about the window for the second dose," Blackford said. "Some are saying you can go substan-

tially longer than that seven-day window, but we're certainly targeting to get everybody their second dose within that seven-day window."

According to the Missouri COVID-19 Dashboard, as of Feb. 17 571 second doses have been administered in Nodaway County. A total of 3,914 doses have been administered in the county, 3,339 of them being first doses.

It is currently unknown if a missed second dose would require someone to go back through the entire vaccination process, including redoing the first dose.

According to Missouri's COVID-19 Dashboard, as of Feb. 16 Missouri residents 85 years or older — representing the largest group initiating vaccinations — make up 34.9% of people in the state getting vaccines. People ages 65 to 74 years old are the second largest group initiating vaccinations at 25.2%. Student-aged populations, 15 to 24 years old, are the smallest group initiating vaccination in the state at 3%.

There is no information on how many of these age groups are actually receiving vaccines in Nodaway County.

According to the Nodaway County Dashboard, as of Feb. 15, the most recent information, there is one new case and a total of 2,549 cases. There are 18 current cases in the county, 10 of which are from Northwest.

New local business offers nutritional shakes, teas

HAILEY MACH
News Reporter | @haileymach98

With a University known for its athletic programs, it's no surprise that another nutrition store has made its way into the community. Northwest Nutrition held their grand opening ceremony Feb. 6. Owner Sarah Kimberly remembered back to when they had first opened their doors to business and a raging blizzard took place the same day.

Sarah Kimberly and her husband Thomas Kimberly opened Northwest Nutrition on the corner of South Main and West First Street. The store offers meal replacement shakes and energizing teas. Additionally, they offer a service to customers who purchase both a shake and tea where they can receive advice on what to eat and keep track of their weight loss or gain.

"For the last two years I have really been into nutrition and just living a healthier life," Sarah Kimberly said, keeping her three children in mind.

Sarah Kimberly wants to live a long and healthy life to be able to

teach her kids the importance of an active lifestyle. She described Northwest Nutrition as a happy environment that offers the community a place where they come to feel better about themselves.

Sarah and Thomas Kimberly currently operate their business with the two of them switching off shifts at the shop. Living in the small town of Rushville, Missouri, the couple's commute to Northwest Nutrition is a two-hour round trip. They decided to take their business to Maryville to stay in a smaller community but also somewhere they could see the business thriving. The two want to test out the waters before they consider hiring employees.

"We're not looking to get rich; we're just looking to stay busy and help people with whatever they need," Thomas Kimberly said. "We're both pretty big into health and fitness and stuff, so it's just something we enjoy."

Thomas Kimberly, a veteran of the U.S. Army, expressed his increase in interest in health and fitness after serving in the military for six years. He said it is impor-

tant to him to live a healthy lifestyle and work out to stay in shape. Due to Thomas Kimberly's time spent serving the military, Northwest Nutrition offers a discount to current and former members of the military as well as first responders.

Thomas Kimberly's favorite flavor of Northwest Nutrition's protein shakes is chocolate. At the store, the shake powder is blended with ice and water, but while at home, Thomas Kimberly enjoys making the shake with whole milk. He noted that the shakes their store sells don't leave a foul taste in his mouth afterward compared to other similar products on the market that do leave an aftertaste.

"When I'm lifting and trying to bulk, I really like protein and the meal replacements because I work nonstop. I own my own construction business, so it's kind of hard for me to stop and eat all the time," Thomas Kimberly said.

Aside from Northwest Nutrition, Thomas Kimberly also owns a construction company called Extra Hands Handyman Services located in central Missouri. While busy on



ADDALYNN BRADBURY | NW MISSOURIAN
Northwest Nutrition owner Sarah Kimberly hands a drink to a customer in her and her husband's store that opened Feb. 6.

the job, he likes to drink meal replacement shakes because of their convenience. Thomas Kimberly said that the shakes that Northwest Nutrition sells are the only meal replacement shakes he's had that do not upset his stomach.

"My dream is ultimately to be able to, you know, have some gym equipment, have a place where people can

work out," Sarah Kimberly said.

Sarah Kimberly hopes to add other products such as pre-workout, post-workout and electrolyte drinks in the future.

Northwest Nutrition's hours of operation are 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays and are closed Sundays and Mondays.



ADDALYNN BRADBURY | NW MISSOURIAN
Peep Connect co-founder Zerryn Gines displays his app for helping people find small businesses around their cities. The app had officially launched in the midst of the pandemic on Sept. 21, 2020.

need to not only survive but be sustainable and ultimately make them super tech-savvy to be able to stay alive in this new ecosystem that we're in," Gines said.

What originally began as an idea for a platform allowing Northwest students to find things to do, Peep Connect turned into something the founders had not initially imagined. Peep Connect CEO Valentine Osakwe and co-founder Zerryn Gines started up the app in January 2020. After COVID-19 came into the picture, the two decided to pivot the focus of Peep Connect to small businesses in April 2020.

The app had officially launched in the midst of the pandemic on Sept. 21, 2020. During the first week, Gines said that there were more than 300 downloads.

"We really want to create this symbiotic platform that gives small businesses everything that they

well as all of the support they have received is what kept them to remain hopeful.

Being Black founders, Gines and Osakwe had captured the attention of Forbes and were mentioned in an article during the same week that Peep Connect had launched.

Gines said the two were also nominated for the Forbes 30 under 30.

"Being nominated for that is crazy because that's like somebody is saying that you're top of the top in the country for entrepreneurship," Gines said.

Gines added that he doesn't believe that they have made it to the top just yet, but they plan to reach that point one day.

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Black-owned mobile app serves 25 businesses, makes Forbes headlines

HAILEY MACH
News Reporter | @haileymach98

Peep Connect, a Black-owned mobile platform that facilitates communication between local businesses and their community, was created by two Northwest students who had a desire to design a platform that focused on local businesses, as opposed to wide-scale apps like Yelp or Doordash.

What originally began as an idea for a platform allowing Northwest students to find things to do, Peep Connect turned into something the founders had not initially imagined. Peep Connect CEO Valentine Osakwe and co-founder Zerryn Gines started up the app in January 2020. After COVID-19 came into the picture, the two decided to pivot the focus of Peep Connect to small businesses in April 2020.

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"We really want to create this symbiotic platform that gives small businesses everything that they



need to not only survive but be sustainable and ultimately make them super tech-savvy to be able to stay alive in this new ecosystem that we're in," Gines said.

The platform sends out notifications to the community when businesses have things like sales or new items. Peep Connect can also help businesses grow their clientele and track their growth. There are 25 local businesses signed up with Peep Connect. Gines said they had reached out to close to 400 businesses throughout the past year to try and get them to sign up with Peep Connect.

With both of the Peep Connect founders' parents being small business owners, the two were familiar with the struggles that came along with it. Gines said that hearing the positive feedback from people they know from coast-to-coast as

FULL STORY ONLINE:
NWMISSOURINEWS.COM

City adds new counseling service

WESLEY MILLER
News Reporter | @wesleymiller360

A new counseling service has found a home at 200 North Dewey St. — Janet Luzmoor Counseling, LLC.

Janet Luzmoor, along with family, friends and others who helped her get there, celebrated a ribbon cutting ceremony that marked the official opening Feb. 11.

Luzmoor said her expertise is directed at adults and couples in need of counseling. She said that she isn't suited for severe conditions but is aiming at the "worried well." "Worried well" is a term used to describe people who are generally healthy but believe they may be ill.

"In this day and age, there are more and more who can benefit from counseling," said Kelli Morris, member of the Northwest Missouri Enterprise Facilitation.

Luzmoor shares this new building with a massage therapy office, Therapeutic Massage of Maryville, and a speech therapy office, Luke Therapy Services, LLC.

The Northwest Missouri Enterprise Facilitation helped Luzmoor get started with her own counseling practice. It is a nonprofit organization that offers free consultations to anyone who wishes to start a business.

Morris said they have helped 200 businesses in six counties since 2006. She said they started communicating with Luzmoor about this opportunity this past summer.

Luzmoor has worked elsewhere, but this is her first firm of her own. She said she has six years of mental health education, including master's degrees in

counseling psychology and communication and arts.

"I've had a wide variety of life experiences, and I think that helps me be a more well-rounded therapist," Luzmoor said.

Luzmoor said she lived in the northwest Missouri area most of her life except for during her schooling.

"To come back and do this here is special for me," Luzmoor said.

Before Feb. 11 there were 16 counseling options in the Maryville area. Now that there are 17, it may seem like there are plenty, but President of Mosaic Medical Center - Maryville Nate Blackford said he thinks they are always open to more qualified providers.

"I think mental health is one of the most important issues that we have to address nationally and in our community as well," Blackford said. "I think any time we can add to the number of mental health providers servicing our community, the better off we are."

Blackford said we live in a time where the demand for mental health services is greater than the supply to serve those needs. He said adding another counseling service may relieve the pressure from Mosaic - Maryville or other entities in Maryville.

"I think collectively when we have more resources at our disposal, the better that is for our community and certainly for the patients who need those services," Blackford said.

Hayston Wilson, Luzmoor's son and a counselor at the Northwest Wellness Center, said he thinks this area is in need of more mental health options.

"As someone who grew up in



ADDALYNN BRADBURY | NW MISSOURIAN
Speech pathologist Renea Luke plays a game with her client to build motor skills. Luke owns Luke Therapy Services which offers speech, language and literacy services.

rural northwest Missouri, I believe that there needs to be both more education and advocacy for mental health care in Maryville and the surrounding area," Wilson said.

Wilson said there is a stigma around mental health care in rural communities. He said he believes if people in these communities understood what mental health care involved and looked like, they would

be more open to it.

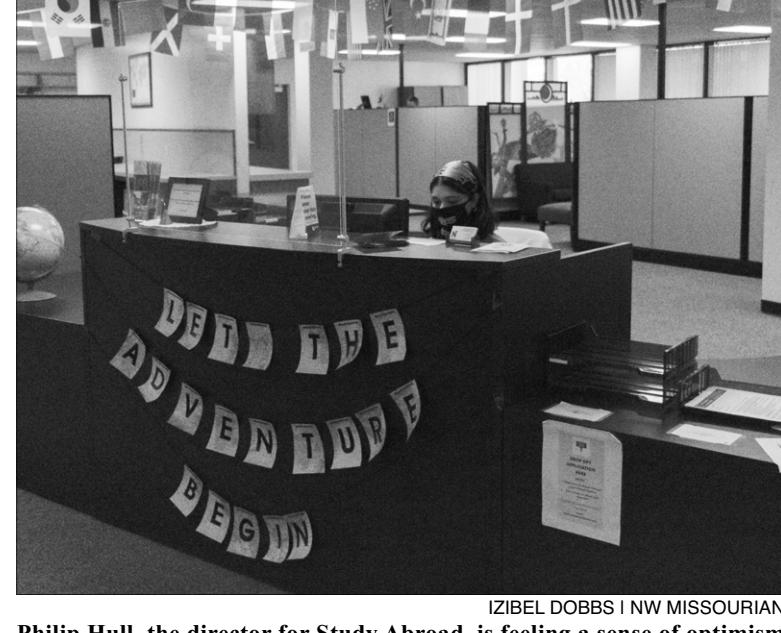
"So essentially, Maryville and the surrounding area need two things: education about mental health and access to care," Wilson said. "Both of these things are slowly improving in our area but are generally still lacking."

Wilson said he hopes this will also provide another option for students at Northwest.

He said Luzmoor may be a better fit to a Northwest student who doesn't feel they are connecting to a counselor at Northwest. However, he did say the one downfall would be Northwest's services are free to students, where they wouldn't be there.

FULL STORY ONLINE:
NWMISSOURINEWS.COM

Study Abroad Office reopens application process



IZIBEL DOBBS | NW MISSOURIAN
Philip Hull, the director for Study Abroad, is feeling a sense of optimism about moving forward with Study Abroad nominations from partner schools overseas. The Study Abroad program is currently taking applications for fall 2021 and spring 2022.

KAILEE FORD
News Reporter | @kailee_ford

The Northwest Study Abroad Office has opened applications for fall 2021 and spring 2022 programs after having to cancel trips for last semester, this spring semester and the approaching summer.

Decisions to cancel fall trips were made toward the end of last spring when the coronavirus first started to hit the United States. Cancellations for this spring were made right before winter break, and decisions about the summer were made in January.

Director of Study Abroad Philip Hull discussed why they waited to make a decision about spring and summer travel.

"We decided if anything changes in terms of COVID-19 and things miraculously loosen up, we didn't want to pull back prematurely," Hull said.

Hull said making a decision in January allowed for no financial repercussions since application and deposit deadlines were originally

set for later in the month.

The office has started moving forward with receiving nominations from partner schools overseas for exchange students to come to Northwest and has received a few applications for travel next spring from students at Northwest.

Hull said the Study Abroad Office is still staying vigilant with the virus and keeping track of any changes that could affect travel. They're watching what other schools are doing regarding the virus and what next semester will look like.

Two resources Hull uses to stay updated are the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website and the U.S. Department of State website, which the office relies on with or without a pandemic to track travel internationally.

The CDC website encourages people not to travel during the pandemic but states that if you need to travel, a mask is required, and travelers coming to the U.S. must have

a negative coronavirus test before boarding the plane.

The website also includes a list of countries and their COVID-19 travel risk, which ranges from very high risk to low risk.

Despite current travel risks, Hull stated he would rather move forward with study abroad plans now than wait too long or cancel too early.

"If we don't do the work to prepare students now, then it's going to be too late to really get students engaged and get enough applicants," Hull said.

Hull would rather have students sign up to travel and cancel later than not do anything at all.

Hull expressed that he felt a sense of optimism about moving forward, not just in the U.S. and at Northwest, but across the globe. He said that the program will continue with plans to travel next fall.

"I think there's also a healthy dose of caution, not the kind that makes you scared, but where you get to the point of working at a steady pace," Hull said.

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CRIME LOG

for the week of Feb. 18

Northwest Missouri State University Police Department

Feb. 11

There is a closed investigation for a drug law offense at Millikan Hall.

There is an open investigation for fraudulent use of a credit card at Sycamore Apartments.

Maryville Department of Public Safety

Feb. 4

There was an accident on the 500 Block of North Main Street between **Krystal L. Ott**, 21, of Sedalia, Missouri, and **Jon B. Peters**, 54, of Quitman, Missouri.

Feb. 5

There is an ongoing investigation for a dog bite on the 1400 Block North Mulberry Street.

Feb. 6

There is an ongoing investigation for harassment on the 1600 Block of South Main Street.

A summons was issued to **Cameron R. Stornello**, 19, of Fayette, Missouri, for driving while intoxicated, Minor in possession, failure to yield and possession of a fake I.D.

Feb. 8

There is an ongoing investigation for a stolen vehicle on the 100 Block of North Depot Street.

A debit card was recovered on the 600 Block of East Seventh Street.

Feb. 9

There is an ongoing investigation for lost or stolen property on the 300 Block of North Main Street.

There is an ongoing investigation for damaged property on the 1000 Block of North Country Club Road.

Feb. 11

A summons was issued to **William A. Enk**, 54, for failure to appear in court on the 400 Block of North Market Street.

Feb. 13

A summons was issued to **Rachel L. Anderson**, 30, and **Emily L. Nathaniel**, 37, for domestic assault on the 200 Block of West Davison Square Street.

A debit card was recovered on the 1100 Block of South Main Street.

Alexander J. Tison, 22, was involved in an accident on the 1600 of North Grand Street. A citation was issued to **Tison** for careless and imprudent driving.

Feb. 14

A summons was issued to **Tyler M. Steele**, 21, for driving while intoxicated on the 100 Block of Lawn Avenue.

There was an accident on South Buchanan Street and West Lincoln Street between **Charles T. Izard**, 21, and **Cody P. Eitel**, 35.

There was an accident on North Main Street and West Ninth Street between **Braden M. Carpenter**, 18, of Lawson, Missouri, and **Michael Logan**.

VACCINE

CONTINUED FROM A1

"I knew that some of the girls would still be uncomfortable with being in person, so I continued to plan for both in person and virtual," Biga said. "I plan to keep things generally the same with mitigations but will be looking to plan more in-person interactive events."

One of the biggest changes that was made due to the category shift is that events on campus can now have food and drinks, while off-campus events are still not allowed to. These events with food must follow all University mitigation procedures and meet COVID-19 requirements like ordering food through Aramark and campus dining.

"Our campus dining provider has helped us develop and is managing our COVID protocols around food on campus," Baker said. "If you walk past the bookstore in the Union, there is a door that says 'Campus Dining,' and you can walk in there, and they can take your catering order."

Off-campus events are allowed to continue as long as all University mitigation efforts are still being enforced. These events are not allowed to happen if social distancing cannot be maintained, and all of the

ROBERTS

CONTINUED FROM A1

The unlikely and somewhat confrontational run-in blossomed into a friendship that both describe as more of a sibling relationship. Oliver and Roberts each said the pair was inseparable during their time at Northwest.

"If people saw me by myself, it wouldn't even be 'Marlon, how are you?'" Oliver said. "It would be 'Hey, where's Brittany?'"

Both of them still get constantly asked about how their twin is doing, and neither will try to correct the error. For Oliver and Roberts, it's no issue that they are seen as siblings because that's how they view themselves.

"We went with it," Oliver said. "On campus, we were known as twins."

The always outgoing Roberts loves to make connections. Energetic, empathetic and relatable were the qualities that Oliver said someone could notice in Roberts instantaneously. Roberts is not a shy person. She is willing to power through any awkward barrier in order to engage with someone.

Though she believes being uncomfortable forces change, when Roberts is around campus or in Maryville she strives to be outgoing and caring even while her facial expressions are hidden behind a mask. She wants people to have a friend no matter who or where they are.

"I know everyone in this town knows who I am. They may not know my name, but they know who I am," Roberts said.

Roberts said that she is a little more conservative in Maryville. Her clapping in church is not as exuberant here, and her demeanor isn't as "vibrant" at times as it is back home.

For Roberts though, the journey to progress is all about exposure. Just as she exposes churchgoers in Maryville to a new style of worship, she sought to expose students, staff and faculty to new people and ideas.

Roberts vividly remembers a class project during her undergraduate career in which she and Oliver were the first Black people another student in her group had ever met. The student's previous exposure to Black people had been from the HBO hit series "The Wire," Roberts said.

"She pulled us aside and said, 'I just want to tell you guys that you've changed my perception,'" Roberts said. "I was like, 'That's why I need to be here.'"

For Roberts, the initial culture of a small Midwestern town was jarring. She spent most of her college career on campus, partially because being out in Maryville wasn't comfortable for her at first. To Roberts, campus and Maryville felt like two different worlds, and she wasn't eager to travel to the other world. That has now changed for her; she feels more comfortable in the community but understands that there are still students who do not feel safe traveling around in this small town.

It's important to note that Roberts doesn't necessarily agree with the statement that Maryville is a "racist town," a sentiment Associate Provost of Diversity and Inclusion Justin Mallett brought up at a recent Board of Regents meeting. The town is just new to this, new to progress, new to conversations about diversity and different cultures, Roberts said.

"I don't think it's a racist town," Roberts said. "I think it's a curious town."

events must take place inside Nodaway County.

When it comes to holding both on-campus and off-campus events, maintaining guidelines are completely up to the people hosting the event. Baker said accountability is a big part of making sure campus can stay open and case rates stay down.

"We don't have an army of people who go out to make sure student organizations are following the rules," Baker said. "We have been pretty clear since July that we want to have safe activities."

The future of Northwest events is up to those students and advisers who are hosting the events. They have the responsibility to make sure they are following guidelines from the University and the CDC to keep people safe.

"You have done a wonderful job of this so far, but if numbers trend in the wrong direction, then we could be moved into a more restrictive category again," Hoffmann said in his letter to student leaders. "It is up to each of us to continue to follow mitigation measures so COVID numbers continue to decline and we can allow more opportunities for organizations to host events and socialize while still being safe."

POWER

CONTINUED FROM A1

The level 3 emergency order, which enacted outages, went into effect at 6:15 a.m. Tuesday and lasted until about 10:43 a.m., when Evergy announced the order had been lifted. During that time, more than 200,000 customers were impacted by the outages, according to Evergy's outage map.

There were 15 total outages in Evergy's service area Feb. 17, at the time of publication, but none of them were in Maryville.

The rolling power outages affecting Maryville began Feb. 15, and were originally expected to continue through Feb. 17. Outages conducted by Evergy were expected to last 30 to 60 minutes, but many took to social media to share that their outage lasted more than an hour. Program Director at KXCV-KRNW, the NPR affiliate station based on campus, Patty Holly

replied to a University Police tweet and said her outage lasted for more than two hours.

Customers who experience a power outage in the future do not need to report the outage, Baker said, unless the outage lasts more than an hour. In that case, Maryville customers should call 888-544-4852.

According to Gina Penzig, external communications manager of Evergy, outages could occur anytime regional power demand is greater than supply; with recent cold weather, demand has been high. Penzig advises customers to voluntarily reduce energy usage and have a plan in place for an outage.

UPD Chief Clarence Green said Evergy did not inform Northwest of when the outages would affect campus or which parts of campus. When the outages occur, it typically takes the University extra time following the outage to have pow-

er running again.

"With our system, if we're off for 60 minutes or even 30 minutes, it's going to take us about another 30 to 60 minutes to bring our systems back on," Green said. "You can't just flip all the power back on at such a large facility. Not without blowing some stuff up."

Like Evergy, UPD asks that students be aware of their environment, stay indoors and leave only to get necessities for short periods of time, dress appropriately and help others to conserve energy.

Green also said students should keep extra blankets around and not use space heaters or light candles in the residence halls in order to avoid fire hazards.

Additional energy conservation efforts encouraged by the SPP, Evergy and the University include setting the thermostat between 65 and 68 degrees, closing blinds and shades and unplugging unused appliances.

be connected, according to Green.

"There is no commonality of the incidents, and they appear to be crimes of opportunity," Green said in an email to The Missourian.

UPD released a statement on its Facebook page Feb. 10 regarding people feeling unsafe. The statement said to be aware of your surroundings and to lock all your doors, including room and vehicles. Additionally, the department added that if you must walk alone to call a friend to talk to on the way.

Green said the investigations are still open, and UPD does not have any suspects at the time of publication.

Series of thefts on campus not related, per UPD

WESLEY MILLER
News Reporter I @wesleymiller360

There were three reports of theft over the course of three consecutive days on Northwest's campus from Feb. 6-8.

There was a report of theft on Lot 59 Feb. 6, another theft on Lot 10 Feb. 7 and a third report of theft on Lot 42 Feb. 8.

University Police Chief Clarence Green said that while police did not find evidence of forced entry, the thefts did occur from vehicles. Despite the short time between each incident, the thefts do not appear to



Northwest senior Amberlea Auffert (left) has been involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters since September 2020. The organization is offering a raffle in an effort to recruit additional "Bigs" to BBBS of Nodaway County.

Local organization seeks recruits, increased funds

KENDRICK CALFEE
News Editor I @calfee_kc

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Nodaway County has a history of bringing people together by providing mentors for children in their service area. With a recent shortage of "bigs" and funds to support the program, the organization is launching a recruiting campaign to bring more mentors and additional money into the organization.

Lynette Harbin, the organization's executive director, said BBBS of Nodaway County has planned opportunities for people of all ages to get more involved and serve. In April, the program is partnering with BBBS of Kansas City to celebrate the new Big Draft Class by having a grand prize drawing.

The prize of the drawing is a Kansas City Chiefs season tickets package for two in the lower level at the 50-yard line in Arrowhead Stadium.

There are two ways people can be entered into the prize drawing: becoming a big or helping draft a big into the organization. Anyone who attends an information session before the end of April 2021 will get a T-Shirt and an entry into the drawing. Similarly, anyone who drafts a friend to become a big that attends an information session will also be entered in the contest.

Harbin said BBBS of Nodaway County has always seen a large amount of support from the local community and is looking forward to the events planned this spring.

"There are a lot of people in this community that believe in the kids as much as we do," Harbin said. "We need them to help us financially support those relationships, and we're always blessed by the outpouring of care we receive. We have an amazing community."

One way the community can show their support is through the 30 Donors 30 Days initiative, where BBBS of Nodaway County is trying to find 30 people to make either a one-time donation or sign up for monthly matchmakers.

"Even \$10 a month can make a huge impact on our program," Harbin said.

BBBS of Nodaway County has scheduled its largest annual fundraiser called "Bowl for Kids' Sake" for April 16 at Bearcat Lanes. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on Nodaway County, this event was canceled last year and left a void in the nonprofit's budget.

This year, the organization is taking extra steps to ensure funds are coming into the program without relying too heavily on Bowl for Kids' Sake.

"Bowl for Kids' Sake has always been a great fundraiser for us, but I

realized that we focus too much on the bowling and not enough time on the fundraising," Harbin said. "The annual fundraising event was created years ago and is a tradition Nodaway County residents look forward to every year."

Northwest senior Amberlea Auffert has been a big in BBBS Nodaway since September 2020. She said the program has been a rewarding experience.

"My favorite thing about being a big is doing things with my little that she has never done before," Auffert said. "It's so fun to be a part of her life and be that person for her to talk to and be her outlet."

Auffert is involved on campus, being a member of Phi Mu and serving on the Northwest Homecoming Executive Board as the public relations and communications chair. Even with her other commitments, BBBS is something Auffert always looks forward to.

"To anyone interested in BBBS — do it," Auffert said. "Even if you don't feel like you are going to make that much of an impact, you really are. These kids look forward to hanging out with you and love to have another person to look up to."

People can request information about becoming a big and spring events scheduled by BBBS Nodaway by emailing info@BBBS-Nodaway.org.

FOR THE CULTURE: Why these 28 days matter to all of us

CORBIN SMITH
Columnist
@curly_corbs



Editor's note: As a celebration and remembrance for Black History Month, Corbin Smith will be producing a For The Culture column every week of the month of February.

What is Black History Month? Is it a time to flaunt fancy quotes from Black celebrities? Is it a time for businesses to appeal to the Black community? Or is it just an excuse for Black supremacy? If you answered yes to any of those, you're wrong. Especially the last one.

In September of 1915, historian Carter G. Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History with the intent of promoting the achievements of Black Americans and people of African descent. Woodson decided to use the ASNHL to reach a wider audience, creating the first Negro History Week starting Feb. 7, 1926.

Containing the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, Woodson settled on February to honor the two men whose efforts propelled the Black community tremendously. With support from Black communities all across America, in 1976 — the 50th anniversary of the ASNHL — the association officially changed to the month-long format we know, and should love, today.

So, what is Black History Month? Black History Month is a time to reflect on American history, educate people on the achievements of the Black community and celebrate the steps we've taken to get here.

Personally, I view Black History Month as a replanting of my tree of Black knowledge. The tree grows year-round, of course, but new soil promotes more growth for the trip around the sun. That's my goal every year, to become more well-versed in Black American history and to use it to teach those who were thrown on the same white-washed history boat.

Black History Month is also a time where I feel the most powerful in my Blackness. Being around white influences really opens your eyes to how Black you are, but seeing Black people in places you won't usually outside of February is inspiring.

It's also really nice to have Black History Month events on campus. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion has already done an amazing job with the hosting of "Soul Food" and Black Jeopardy night. Seeing these events and having people positively embrace Black culture just makes me feel so much more welcomed.

Black history reminds me that Black people were more than just slaves in America. They were inventors, athletes, scholars, politicians, parents and so much more. A lot of the time, Black history gets swept right under the rug our feet weigh down. Being Black is more than the nitty-gritty pain and sorrow my people have endured. It's the greatness we've created to counter the strife we've faced.

I believe Black History Month should be more than just a month, but it means a lot to me to even have one. February is a reminder of my excellence. Black History Month is a reminder of Black excellence.



CHRIS YOUNG | NW MISSOURIAN

OUR VIEW:

People participating in local politics, it's nice to see

If the American political landscape were The Beatles, local politics would be the George Harrison of the group. The perhaps least "sexy" of political topics, local politics are often more important to our daily lives than anything that would make Fox News or CNN. Local politics have taken somewhat of a spotlight in Maryville and Nodaway County during the pandemic, and even with all the ugliness the bright light brings, it's nice to see competition and interest in Maryville and Nodaway County politics.

National and even state politicians are often out of touch with the people they are supposed to be representing. The phrase "gone Washington" is frequently used by either side to disparage their opponents' campaigns in congressional and Senate races. Sometimes the lawmaker won't even maintain a residence in the state they represent — looking at you, Sen. Josh Hawley.

Local politicians, however, are very much members of the same community as their constituents. They work with people they represent. They attend church with them, cheer at sporting events with them, shop at the same stores and are even Facebook friends with the people who may or may not have voted for them.

Upcoming City Council elections

have not always been a hot-button issue in Maryville. The last election June 6, 2020, featured two current City Council members Ben Lipiec and Rachael Martin running unopposed. The voter turnout was 5.8% of Maryville's registered voters. That year was not an outlier. In 2019 — when the use tax vote was retried and in essence snuck past those who rejected it in 2018 — fewer than 800 votes were cast on the issue, and Councilman Tye Parsons won in an unopposed election.

This year the ballot will look a little different. Four candidates have filed for the two open positions on City Council as current Councilmen Jason McDowell and Matt Johnson are not seeking re-election. This election will in many ways mirror the one from 2017 that saw four candidates running for two seats and had a vote total of more than double the 2019 and 2020 elections combined.

And the Maryville R-II School Board election will follow the same simple formula as the City Council: four candidates, two seats, no incumbents.

Yes, many of us have been forced to listen to history teachers and news anchors that endlessly tout the many "virtues of American democracy" and how competition is the bedrock of those virtues. Just because it's a cliche doesn't mean it's any less true.

Our representative democracy relies on competition to make sure all sides of an issue are heard and our politicians are honest. Human nature relies on competition so that we don't become bored with even the most important topics because there is no stake in the game for us.

While there may not be anything particularly malicious or sadistic occurring in local elections that are unopposed, it's not ever really a good sign. Lack of opposition does not normally mean everyone agrees on something; it means people have become too lazy to stand in opposition.

Local officials can change the very landscape of a community for better or worse, and if no one pays attention enough to oppose or care, they can do it without anyone knowing.

Perhaps the truest sentiment that should be agreed upon by every registered voter in America is that if you have the opportunity to vote and don't, then you don't have the right to complain about elected officials and their decisions.

It is nice, though, that when people go to fill out a ballot for the Board of Education and the City Council in Maryville in 2021, they will be looking at a list of names longer than the list of seats available.

YOUR VIEW:

Do you keep up with local politics in Maryville? Why or why not?

DEVYN PHILLIPS
Sophomore
Psychology



"I'm not really that up to date on Maryville-specific stuff. I know what they're doing with COVID and all that stuff."

KAYLA WALSER
Sophomore
Marine Biology



"I do not keep up with politics in Maryville because I'm more worried about my classes and my job as an RA."

HANNAH ESTAS
Freshman
Undecided



"I don't really follow Maryville politics, just because I am kind of more interested in what is happening back in my hometown and national politics."

THE STROLLER: Your Bearcat loves drifting on campus

If you don't own a four-wheel-drive vehicle, you might want to make sure that your airbags are effective and your insurance is up to date.

Just when I thought I figured out how to drive in the winter, Maryville goes out of their way to not plow the roads or salt them. But hey, at least Main Street "isn't that bad," right?

The roads on campus are no better. I get jealous of the people who have no problem coming to a complete stop on campus and then

are able to just drive away. My car thinks that we need to slide sideways, not catch traction and test the theory of the afterlife before deciding to actually move.

It's fine though, who doesn't like a near death experience while going to Taco Bell?

This winter storm was the last thing we needed after everything in 2020. I thought we all agreed that we were going to attempt to make this year better. Apparently, Mother Nature was not on board for this one.

It was so cold outside this week that salt was doing absolutely nothing to melt ice. Road crews were essentially seasoning the roads the same way some of your moms season a chicken breast.

So let me slide into the curb in peace because from what I can tell, no one in Maryville is going to do anything about the roads anyway.

I just want my 70-degree weather back. I want my windows down, blaring "All Night Longer" while my friends and I mumble the words that we don't remem-

ber. This minus 25 degree wind chill and having to turn the music down to focus on not sliding into the car in front of me just ain't it.

Can we all agree on at least one thing? Driving anywhere in Maryville the day after it snows is asking for a death sentence. To say the least, I am not here for it, and neither is my car.

The Stroller has been a tradition since 1918 and does not reflect the views of The Northwest Missourian.

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WOMEN

CONTINUED FROM A8

In Bearcat Arena, Jobe finished with a game-high 25 points, including 5 in the last minute to give the Hornets a 56-51 lead with 17.5 seconds left. Keeping Jobe contained will be an all-around team effort.

"We got to keep her in front. We have to make sure we don't let her get angles. If she's coming off-ball screens, we have to make sure our

hedge people are staying with the ball and not leaving early, giving her space," Meyer said. "It's going to be a team effort of trying to keep her corralled. She's definitely one of the best, if not the best, point guards in the league."

Coleman was given the task of guarding Jobe in the first matchup, but with her being out due to injury, Haggard now takes on that challenge. Meyer will also look to put some size on her with the Bearcats' post players, hoping to disrupt her shot.

Traditionally, Emporia is known for mixing its defense up. The Bearcats are expecting to see a more aggressive half-court zone, including full court pressure. Northwest will have to look down the floor against the pressure and come to the pass instead of letting it float in the air.

Although Emporia came out in a zone defense last contest, the 'Cats have to be ready for any tricks up the Hornets' sleeves. A couple of years ago, Meyer had his team pre-

pare against the zone, but the Hornets stuck with man-to-man defense for 40 minutes.

A recent theme in the Bearcats' offense is 3-point shooting, including 14 made 3-pointers against Missouri Southern and a season-high 17 3-pointers Feb. 6 against Missouri Western.

"We are obviously going to take the open 3's when they're open, but we won't strap ourselves to it if we don't have to. We have seen a lot of success in our offense when we get

the ball moving and in everybody's hands throughout the possession," Haggard said. "If that means we work it around and it leads to an open 3, we'll let out good shooters take those shots. If we have inside looks, we will definitely utilize those as well."

The comeback win for Emporia left a bad taste in the mouth of the Bearcats but keeping the contest close with a top-tier MIAA team gives them hope for capturing a win the second time around.

'Hounds hopeful to get revenge on Savannah

CALVIN SILVERS
Sports Reporter | @CalvinSilvers



Maryville boys basketball carried a four-game winning streak into its Feb. 12 matchup against Benton, with the last loss coming 21 days prior from the Savannah Savages.

Spoofhound coach Matt Stoecklein labeled his team as gritty after completing a four-game win streak Feb. 5. However, there seemed to be a lack of grittiness to the 'Hounds as the 56-46 loss to Benton (11-8) diminished their quest for five wins in a row.

Maryville began the contest on a 12-4 run, with senior guard Trey Houchin showing off his range, hitting back-to-back 3-pointers with less than three minutes remaining in the first quarter.

"(Maryville) relaxed a little on defense, and then (Benton) hit a couple shots, and things started to go against us," Stoecklein said. "We missed a couple shots. We hung our heads. We pouted. We sulked, and that was the start of that."

Benton junior Kason Mauzey did not let his team throw in the towel early, scoring 8 points in the final two minutes of the quarter. The second quarter was not much better for the Spoofhounds' defense, allowing Benton to build an 18-0 run.

"They just hit shots that people hadn't been hitting and that can be kind of frustrating. This kid hasn't really hit a 3 all year, hasn't shot the ball great from the outside. Some of those kids were stepping up and hitting those shots," Stoecklein said. "It doesn't matter how it's happen-

ing or what is happening, you continue to battle."

The Spoofhounds did continue to battle, as sophomore guard Caden Stoecklein cut Benton's lead to 6 points with a layup and 3-pointer early in the fourth quarter. Caden Stoecklein finished with 24 points, including 17 in the second half.

However, that was all the 'Hounds had in the tank for a comeback, as Benton capped the game off with an 11-6 run, making it five straight against the Spoofhounds.

Maryville turns its attention to a rematch with Savannah (8-9) in hopes of avenging a 51-33 loss Jan. 22, a game that has been circled on the calendar since.

"For me, it's a game of revenge. It's my only loss as a head coach to Savannah. I think I'm 16-1 against them now," Matt Stoecklein said. "Just the way we left that game, I think the boys will want to come out because there's no love lost between Savannah and us. We're going to want to go out and dominate as best as we possibly can."

The last time the two teams met, Savannah junior guard Quay Jeter was an unstoppable force offensively. Jeter scored 6 of the first 8 points of the match and ended with a game-high 18.

Houchin described that defensive performance as "starting off bad" and "no energy." This time around, the Spoofhounds will have to start the game with confidence if they want to hold Jeter and company in check.

"No. 1, we have to play with much more energy and enthusiasm. That Savannah game we were flat as a team; we were awful as a team," Matt Stoecklein said. "We

just have to make sure that we are much more physical, much more engaged than we were the last time we played them."

The Spoofhounds tried to establish 6-foot-9-inch senior center Marc Gustafson down in the paint, as he had a 6-inch advantage on Savannah post Ethan Dudeck, but the Savages found success double-teaming Gustafson as soon as the ball touched his hands.

While Gustafson finished that game with a team-high 12 points, he wasn't as involved in the offense as his coach would have liked. Besides looking to score, the attention Gustafson draws will leave other capable Maryville scorers open.

"You can still go up and finish against two guys, but one thing we worked on also is hitting the backside guy. Whoever double teams, that guy is wide open," Matt Stoecklein said. "We got to put a kid in a position there that can hit the 3. That's something that we've been working on, is making sure we have people that can space the floor better."

Caden Stoecklein, Houchin and senior Brady Farnan could provide the much-needed spark for Maryville that lacked in the last matchup. All three can shoot the ball extremely well from outside and will look for their big man to find them.

The 33 total points scored was the lowest amount of points the Spoofhounds have tallied this season, making Matt Stoecklein revis-



EMMA GOUREAU | NW MISSOURIAN

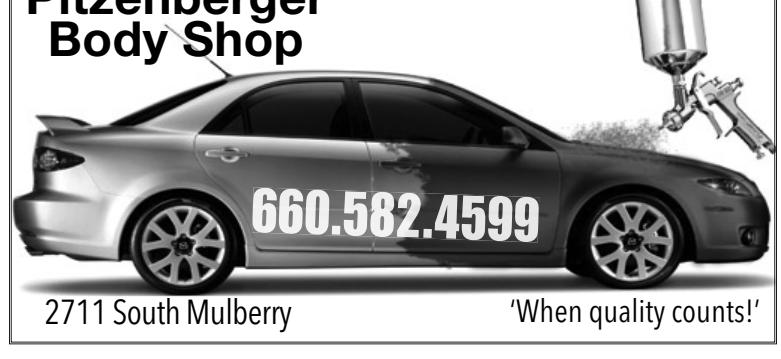
Maryville boys basketball senior guard Trey Houchin makes a layup during the Spoofhounds' 56-46 loss to Benton Feb. 12 in the 'Hound Pound.'

it his offensive game plan before heading into the contest. While Gustafson's ability to find open teammates is crucial, they don't need to rely on him every possession.

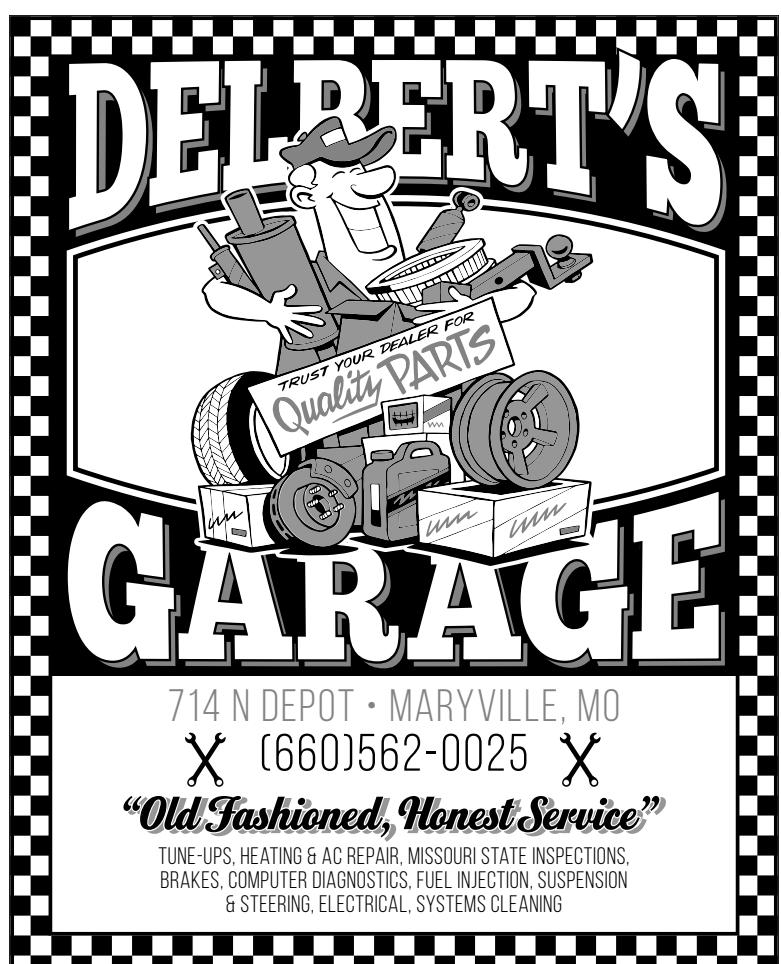
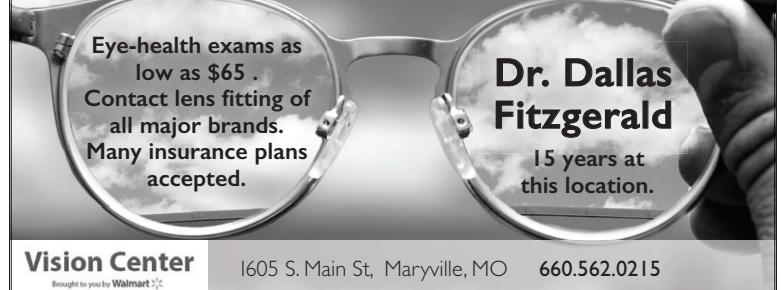
"We come down, and we try to throw to Marc (Gustafson) right away, but we don't have to throw

to Marc right away. We can move the ball from side to side," Matt Stoecklein said. "When you come down and try to go in right away, well, it's easy to double team because they're all set where they want to be. You move it from side to side, now they're out of position."

Pitzenberger Body Shop



The answer is clear.



MEN

CONTINUED FROM A8

"We didn't want to compete," McCollum said Jan. 7. "It's not just our players' fault; it's my fault and everybody else's fault, but we just didn't want to compete."

The Bearcats' current streak sits at 12 games, less than half of what it was prior to their first meeting with Washburn. They've won the rematch with three other MIAA schools during the streak, including the most recent Feb. 13, when they defeated Missouri Southern 83-69 in Bearcat Arena.

In most cases, McCollum said, the rematches are more difficult, mostly because the other team can make adjustments.

When the Bearcats play Washburn roughly six weeks after their first loss of the season, they'll be looking to have the competitiveness McCollum said they lacked in the

initial meeting.

"Anytime you play someone for a second time, you always want to make sure you make the proper adjustments if there are any that need to be made," McCollum said. "Quite frankly, sometimes it's just playing harder. So, we'll approach it how we do whenever we play somebody for a second time, regardless of win or loss. ... It's just about making sure you're giving them your best shot and hopefully that's good enough."

This time, the Bearcats are hoping to have senior Ryan Hawkins play more minutes. In the first meeting, the forward played 25 minutes, scored 8 points and committed three turnovers. The reigning MIAA Defensive Player of the Year fouled out with a little more than a minute left in the second half, leaving Northwest without one of its best defensive players for the rest of the game.

"He's a huge key player," Hudgins said about Hawkins. "Not having him really hurt our offense and defense. Just knowing we're going to have him for a full 40 this time, I hope. I think we'll see a different game."

Prior to the Bearcats' trip to face Washburn, they'll travel Feb. 18 for their rematch with Emporia State in Emporia, Kansas.

The Bearcats' first meeting with Emporia (8-9) didn't mirror the intensity of the Washburn matchup. Instead, it was a 92-71 triumph of the Hornets Jan. 9 in Bearcat Arena.

The Hornets got the version of the Bearcats who were trying to get back on track for the first meeting. This time, they'll get the version of the Bearcats who are trying to stay on track.

"That first game we played against them could've been fool's gold," Hudgins said. "We played really good and shot really well. ... They're a good team, have good players. We're just going to have to get after it."

In sports, games prior to ones with significant meaning are referred to as trap games. McCollum prepares his team the same way for every game, not getting too high or low for any certain event or team.

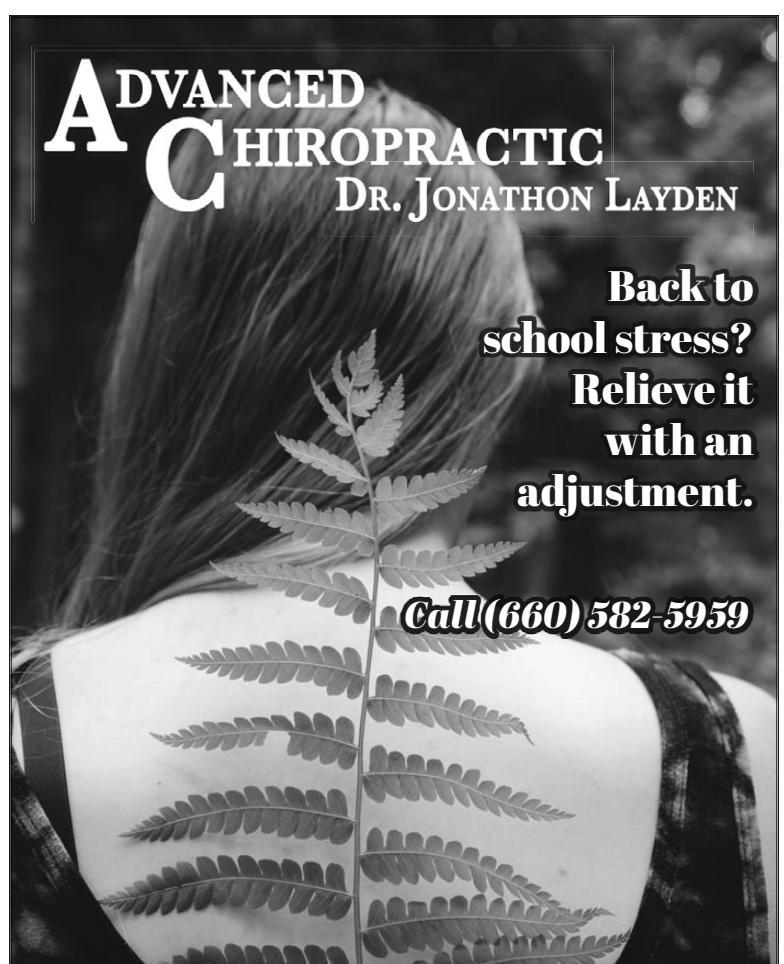
The Bearcats are planning to treat Emporia the same way they'll treat Washburn.

"I don't foresee us getting overly concerned with Washburn when we have Emporia before that," McCollum said. "I think that's just one of those deals that if you're a mature team, you understand you have to take one game at a time."

Wins over both Emporia and Washburn this weekend would secure the Bearcats' eighth consecutive regular season MIAA championship, effectively placing them as the No. 1 seed for the league's post-season tournament.

McCollum knows it won't be an easy task.

"They're two of the tougher places to play, two teams who are good at home," McCollum said. "Both teams are just really good. It's going to be a really difficult, really difficult road test that we need to make sure we're fully aware and fully ready to go for."



Softball season put on hold for second week

KESTON OLTMAN
Sports Reporter | @NWMSports

After the initial postponement to their first game of the season, Northwest softball will have to wait a few days longer.

The Bearcats were supposed to take the field Feb. 21 against Missouri S&T — it would have been the team's first game played in 350 days.

Due to extremely cold temperatures, that game is canceled.

The Bearcats have been sidelined since last March due to COVID-19 and the weather, waiting for the day they can play again.

The Bearcats are now planning to start their season Feb. 26 against Southwest Baptist as part of the Drury Invitational in Springfield, Missouri. They're scheduled to play four total games during the two-day event.

"I think they were ready to play about the second week of January," coach Ryan Anderson said. "They're excited to play, and you can tell we're ready to play. It's been so long that we're at the point where we need to."

The Bearcats return three seniors: outfielder Regan Kirby, pitcher Ashleigh Creek and returning fifth-year senior infielder Kaitlyn Weis. Other than those three veterans, the Bearcats are relatively young with 17 underclassmen on the roster.

"I came back for my family, my teammates and myself," Weis said. "I felt like I wasn't ready to leave that part of my life. I probably would have if I would have finished that last part of the season."

Weis is taking advantage of



IZIBEL DOBBS | NW MISSOURIAN

Freshman pitcher Hayden Simmons practices throwing her different pitches in hopes she can use them in an upcoming game. After their first game of the season got canceled, the Bearcats are still hoping to take the field Feb. 21.

the NCAA's eligibility extension, and she returns as the program's all-time leader in home runs, runs batted in, total bases and slugging percentage. She provides a steady and powerful bat in a lineup that Anderson is confident in.

"We're gonna come out and hit the ball," Anderson said. "Even though we're a young team, we have

a ton of people back; we're not worried about the experience side. We're comfortable with our team."

With COVID-19 hitting the players, the team had erratic practices throughout the fall and didn't have a full team practice until November, leaving the Bearcats behind where they would've liked to be.

"A lot of other teams are experiencing it too. We last played in March," Anderson said.

"We didn't play any games in the fall. We don't know if this kid can handle second base, if this kid can handle right field or if this kid can handle third base. It's been a lot of catch up. We know what's going on now, but we were just behind."

With forecasts predicting the

Success accompanies 'Cats to first away meet of indoor season

WESLEY MILLER
Sports Reporter | @wesleymiller360



Success followed the Northwest track team to Topeka, Kansas, last weekend, with more records set and athletes meeting national marks.

The Ichabod Invitational Feb. 13 marked the first time the Bearcats went on the road this season for a track meet. Their first four were all in the Carl and Cheryl Hughes Fieldhouse. The change of location didn't matter to athletes, as they carried the success they had at home to Washburn's new facility.

Two Northwest records were rewritten, and four athletes met Division II provisional marks in their respective areas.

Sophomore Delanie Dykes broke the women's one-mile run record with a time of 4 minutes, 55 seconds and 71 milliseconds, which was good enough to provisionally qualify. If it weren't for Dykes' performance, junior Caroline Cunningham would've broken the record herself, finishing with a time of 4:58.81. The mile would've been broken either way, but now the duo holds the two highest spots in the program's record book for the one-mile run, a record that had previously stood since 2009.

"The mile record has been a goal

of mine since I found out that I would be running the mile, so it feels amazing to see the work I have put in to get there pay off," Dykes said. "It is also a boost of confidence that I am fit and ready to perform going into the peak of the indoor season."

Sophomore Reece Smith has reset the men's 3000-meter run record three times this season, most recently at the Ichabod Invitational. He had a time of 8:10.65.

"In running, once you run some time, you immediately look forward to running something faster in the future, and that's how I've felt since I first broke the record," Smith said. "Coming into the season I had big goals, and running a time like 8:10 was included on that list."

In addition to breaking records, three other athletes aside from Dykes provisionally qualified. Sophomore Jada Shanklin hit national marks in women's high jump with a jump of 5 feet and 6 inches. Junior Omar Austin had a time of 21.61 in the men's 200-meter dash, which was good enough to meet the Division II provisional time.

Senior Caelon Harkey finished ahead of the Division II provisional time in the men's 60-meter dash 0.03 ahead of the mark with a time of 6.83.

"It was really exciting to hit the Division II provision mark in the

60-meter dash as that is something that I have not been able to accomplish during my career until this weekend," Harkey said.

Shanklin said she felt like her time to hit big marks was coming soon. She said her previous meets weren't bad, but she kept feeling like she could do better.

"I've had challenges this year with staying technically sound with my jump," Shanklin said. "I was very proud of myself for the focus and determination I had to win this meet."

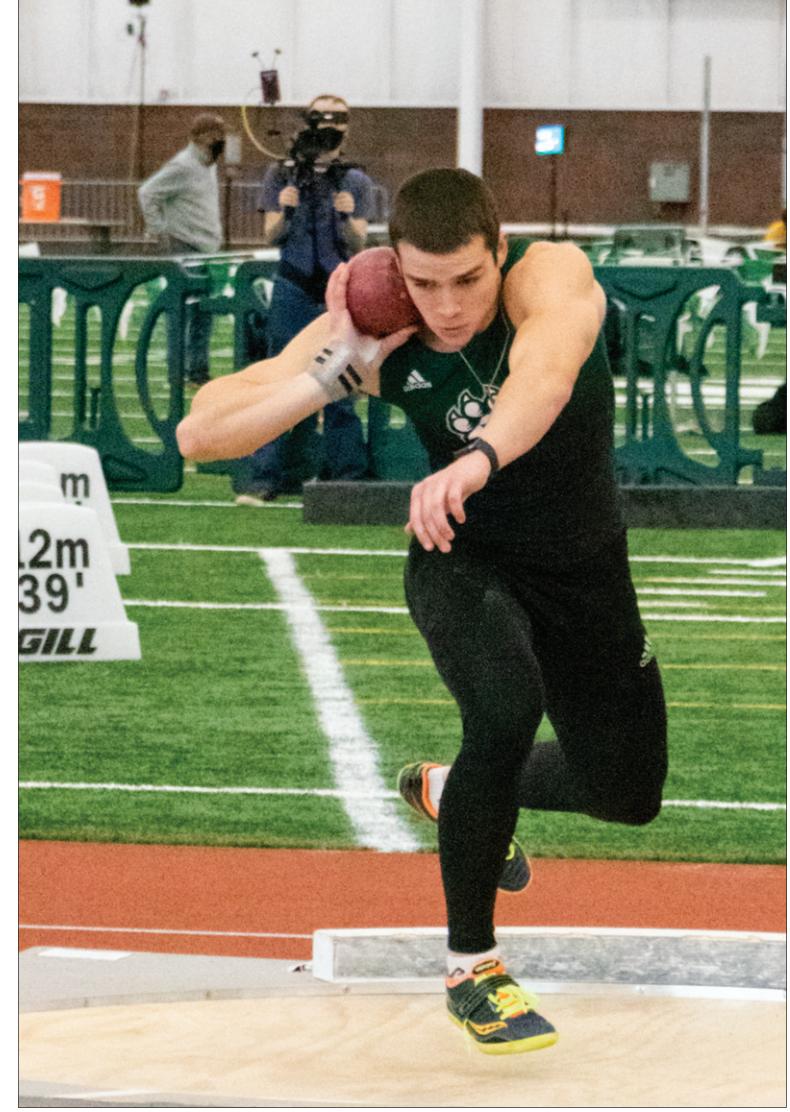
Shanklin said she was able to compete with girls who were leading the nation while acknowledging her technique and its progress through the meets.

"I feel great that I was able to hit a mark that puts me tied for No. 6 in the nation," Shanklin said. "But going forward, I must stay consistent with my jump and really focus on jumping technically because I know if I do that I will be No. 1."

FULL STORY ONLINE:
NWMISSOURINEWS.COM

UP NEXT

MIAA Championships
Feb. 27-28
Topeka, Kansas



IZIBEL DOBBS | NW MISSOURIAN
Junior Jonathan Bock takes his turn in the shot put Feb. 5 at the Bearcat Invite in Hughes Fieldhouse. Bock finished second with a throw of 12.93 meters.

Maryville girls prep for districts amid streaky scheduling

CORBIN SMITH
Sports Reporter | @curly_corbz



ADDALYN BRADBURY | NW MISSOURIAN
Maryville girls basketball sophomore forward Rylee Vierthaler drives down the court for a layup in the Spoofounds' game against LeBlond Feb. 3.

days of the district tournament, which starts Feb. 27.

However, these postponements offer extra rest for Albrecht's team to be in the best shape to compete.

"It doesn't hurt to have an extra day off every once and awhile," Albrecht said. "Some of my kids play a tremendous amount of minutes. I've got some girls with

bumps and bruises, so this day will allow them to heal up. Also, a mental break is good. We're on a 14-game winning streak — there's a lot of pressure that comes with that. A little mental break isn't a bad thing."

With a lengthy winning streak and the best start in program history dangling over his head, Albrecht

is feeling the pressure of the expectations to continue that success. The fear of stumbling and losing that streak weighs on his mind when he's forced to sit at home.

The inability to make it to the 'Hounds Pound on icy days also weighs on senior guard Serena Sundell.

"At this point in the year, there's been a lot of adversity with everything going on," Sundell said. "We have to make sure we control what we can control. Even if we're not playing the team we expect to play the next day, we have to make sure we're getting better."

Sundell pointed out that basketball players can get better without being in a gym. Watching film, scouting opponents or even watching basketball on TV can raise a player's overall basketball IQ. She wants her teammates to do whatever they can to get better in more ways than physical growth.

The senior said it's tough to prepare for an opponent and not get a chance to apply that preparation. Nonetheless, she quickly shrugged off the frustration of canceled games and refocused on the next task in front of her.

"We just have to come into practice, get better and remember our goals," Sundell said.

UP NEXT

MHS @ Savannah
6:30 p.m. Feb. 18
Savannah, Missouri

"Our goals at the end of the season — the district championship and conference championship — if we can keep those at the forefront of our minds, that's going to help us through some of these canceled games."

Maryville is in position to take the MEC title if the weather permits the conclusion of its season. The 'Hounds need to win one of their three remaining conference games in order to add another year to their conference champions banner hanging in the 'Hounds Pound.

One opponent that each MEC school has faced each day for the entirety of the season is the weather, giving each school an equal chance at the title.

"Even though the weather is impacting us, it's also impacting other teams around the area," Albrecht said. "I think this is just a common theme that a lot of schools will have to deal with over the next few days."

SPORTS

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Diagnose the women's team?

That, and more, answered in this week's Walk The Talk.
see A6

Conference killers

MHS girls basketball on verge of MEC title despite weather.
see A7



ANDREW WEGLEY | NW MISSOURIAN

Junior guard Trevor Hudgins drives into the paint in the second half of Northwest men's basketball's 87-75 win over Pittsburg State at Bearcat Arena Feb. 11. Hudgins scored 30 points in the matchup and was later named MIAA Player of the Week in part due to his performance against the Gorillas. He followed that performance with a 31-point outing Feb. 13 against Missouri Southern.

THE REMATCH

No. 3 'Cats travel to No. 15 Washburn, aim to avenge only loss

JON WALKER
Sports Editor | @ByJonWalker

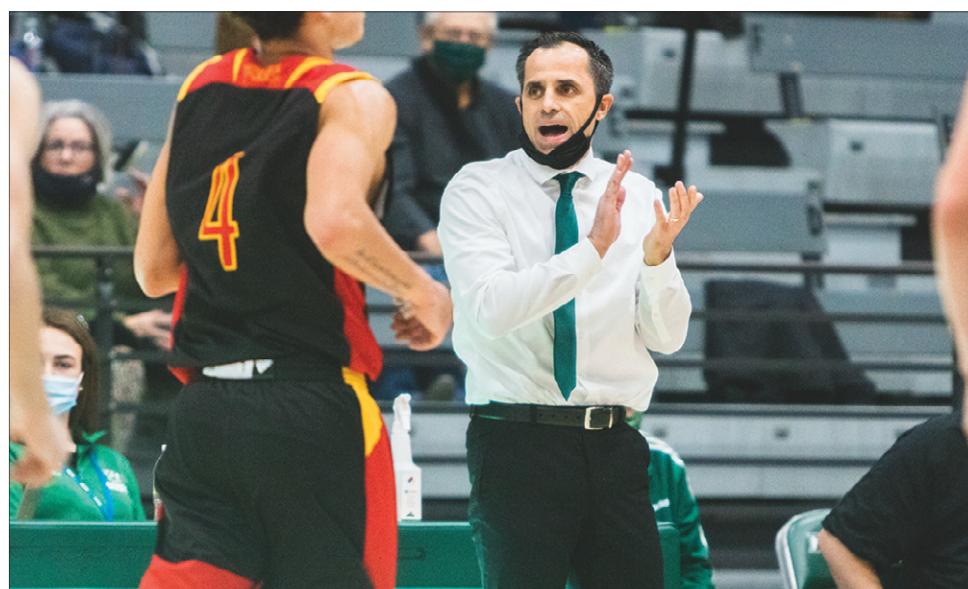
Northwest men's basketball should have had a 41-game win streak in hand when hitting the road to face the Emporia State Hornets and Washburn Ichabods.

Instead, the Ichabods traveled to Maryville Jan. 7 and returned home with an 84-82 victory over the Bearcats, one that ended Northwest's win streak, which was at 28 games prior to the first meeting of the season with Washburn.

"We didn't look forward to tonight, and we need to make sure we look forward to that one down there," Northwest coach Ben McCollum said Jan. 7.

When the No. 3 Bearcats (17-1) travel Feb. 20 to face No. 15 Washburn (14-3) in Topeka, Kansas, they'll have a chance to show how much they've looked forward to the rematch that's been more than a month in the making.

"I think we're focused now. I think we have motivation," Northwest junior guard Trevor Hudgins said. "I think this time you're going to see a better team, see us compete. I feel like they kind of punched us in our mouth last time at our house, and we didn't show any heart. I feel like next time, it's go-



ANDREW WEGLEY | NW MISSOURIAN
Coach Ben McCollum claps toward his players as they transition back into defense during the first half of Northwest men's basketball's 87-75 win over Pittsburg State Feb. 11 in Bearcat Arena.

ing to be different.

It was one of two losses Hudgins has endured to this point in his collegiate career. He isn't used to losing, nobody a part of the Northwest men's basketball program the last

handful of years is. The Bearcats are 148-7 over the last five seasons, including the program's only two national championships.

The last time the Bearcats lost — a 71-60 loss to Central Missouri Dec. 7, 2019, in

UP NEXT

Northwest @ Emporia State
7:30 p.m. Feb. 18

Warrensburg, Missouri — it jolted them from their comfort zone, which has been accompanied by the copious number of wins. After that, they went on the aforementioned win streak, which could've been longer if not for the COVID-19 pandemic halting their post-season run last year.

They're hoping to avoid another indelible loss when hitting the road this week.

"I feel like they are a huge wake-up call to us," Hudgins said about the two losses he's experienced. "I feel like we just sometimes lose sight of things, lose sight of our goals a little bit. We're just so focused on not losing that we're not focused on winning half of the time. ... At the end of the day, we've gotta focus on winning."

McCollum's biggest critique of his team after the team's latest wake-up call was that their competitiveness paled in comparison to Washburn's, which eventually led to the Bearcats' first home loss since March 10, 2018.

SEE MEN | A6

Women fight for MIAA Tourney bid with road trip

CALVIN SILVERS
Sports Reporter | @CalvinSilvers

Northwest women's basketball honored six departing seniors Feb. 13 against Missouri Southern on Senior Day. Besides celebrating the career of these athletes, the Bearcats had one more gift in store.

A 78-55 triumph completed a season sweep over the Lions for the first time since the 2009-10 season and marked the Bearcats' seventh conference win, the most they've had in 8 years.

"I think the underlying theme of this team is adversity. I am proud to be a part of the team that has been built from the ground up, and this senior class especially has done a great job of establishing connectivity and dedication," senior guard Jaelyn Haggard said. "To have the

most wins in that many years says a lot about our character and determination to get better."

The Bearcats were looking to add to their conference win total Feb. 16 against Washburn, which would have been the first meeting between the two programs this season. However, the game was postponed to Feb. 23 due to Northwest's campus closure because of extreme cold temperatures.

The attention is now placed on Emporia State (14-4) as Northwest travels to Emporia, Kansas, Feb. 18. The Hornets sit in the fourth spot in the MIAA rankings, already clinching a spot in the MIAA Tournament.

The last meeting between the two teams came Jan. 19, a game in which the Bearcats entered the fourth quarter leading by 7 points. A full-court press, along with points in transition for the Hornets, caught

Northwest off guard, resulting in a 58-51 loss in Bearcat Arena.

"That game, we struggled again to score in the fourth quarter, and we got open shots," Northwest coach Austin Meyer said. "We didn't have a lot of energy in that fourth quarter. We looked like we got a little fatigued, and they made plays. You got to give them credit. We just have to compete all the way through, and I think we're a team that has improved offensively."

Northwest had to face a lot of adversity in the contest, beginning with having a two-week rest period due to COVID-19 protocols within the program. Jumping back into the gauntlet of MIAA competition with limited physical activity was not an ideal situation for the Bearcats.

The other obstacle Northwest dealt with was overcoming senior guard Kylie Coleman, who had

UP NEXT

Northwest @ Emporia State
5:30 p.m. Feb. 18

the highest 3-pointer shooting percentage, falling to the ground going after a rebound, grabbing her left knee. The collision resulted in a season-ending ACL injury.

While the Bearcats come into the second matchup against the Hornets without Coleman and not as fatigued, they still have to contain Emporia's sophomore point guard Tre'Zure Jobe. Jobe is averaging 20.6 points on 43% shooting, including 34% from beyond the arc. She is physical during off-ball screens, can finish at the rim and can shoot from any area on the court.

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